

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SOFIA 00625 230936Z
ACTION EUR-08

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 PRS-01 PA-01 INR-05 CIAE-00
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R 230855Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2619
INFO AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY WARSAW TIR
USNATO BRUSSELS 562

C O N F I D E N T I A L SOFIA 0625

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SOPN, OGEN, BU
SUBJECT: POSSIBLE MOVE OF RFE/RL TO US

REF: STATE 57405

1. OUR ESTIMATE IS THAT BULGARIAN LEADERSHIP WOULD PRIVATELY
AND PERHAPS PUBLICLY DRAW SEVERAL CONCLUSIONS FROM MOVE OF
RFE/RL TO US. WE WOULD BE THAT FRG HAD SEEN THE LIGHT AND
FINALLY RESPONDED TO CONTINUED BULGARIAN AND SOVIET POUNDING ON THEM
TO NO LONGER PERMIT RFE/RL TO OPERATE FROM THEIR SOIL. GOB
COULD ALSO INTERPRET MOVE AS PARTIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT, AT
LEAST BY FRG, THAT RFE/RL WAS NOT FULLY CONSISTENT WITH
HELSINKI. IN GENERAL, BULGARIAN LEADERSHIP WOULD PER-
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CEIVE AS FRUITFUL OUTCOME OF THEIR UNREMITTING
PUBLIC AND PRIVATE HOSTILITY TO RFE. (EMBASSY BELIEVES
THAT ABOVE WOULD ALSO BE CONCLUSIONS REACHED BY MANY
BULGARIANS INTERESTED IN RFE/RL.)

2. EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT TIMELINESS AND FLAVOR OF BROAD-
CASTS AND RESEARCH WOULD ALMOST INEVITABLY BE MODIFIED

ADVERSELY BY MOVE OF STATIONS TO US. IT IS TRUE THAT INFLUENCES SOMETIMES BROUGHT TO BEAR ON RFE IN MUNICH, VIENNA, AND OTHER PARTS OF WESTERN EUROPE BY EXILE GROUPS MAY OCCASIONALLY HAVE ADVERSE EFFECTS ON NATURE OF BROADCASTS. AT SAME TIME, WHILE IN MUNICH, RADIO OPERATES FROM AN AREA WHERE THERE IS GREAT LOCAL INTEREST IN EASTERN EUROPE, AND WHERE THERE IS POSSIBILITY OF KEEPING TRAVELLERS FROM EASTERN EUROPE. SOME FRIENDLY CRITICS OF RFE HAVE SOMETIMES OBSERVED THAT EVEN IN SUCH AN ENVIRONMENT, ANNOUNCERS LONG OUT OF BULGARIA RISK LOSING ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE CREDIBLY WITH LISTENERS IN BULGARIA. THAT FLAVOR OF AUTHENTICITY, AND THE RISKS OF FURTHER DENATIONALIZATION WOULD BE GREATLY INCREASED BY MOVE TO US.

. GOB'S HOSTILITY TOWARD RFE WOULD NOT BE DIMINISHED BY MOVE TO US NOR BY CHANGEOVER OF BROADCASTING PERSONNEL. GOB'S HOSTILITY TOWARD RFE WOULD BE REDUCED ONLY BY CHANGES IN TONE AND CONTENT OF BROADCASTS, AWAY FROM CRITICISM OF GOB. AS LONG AS RADIOS CONCENTRATE ON INTERNAL AFFAIRS WITHIN THE BLOC -- WHICH WE HERE CONSIDER TO BE RADIOS' IN FUNCTION -- GOB WILL OPPOSE THEIR EXISTENCE. FELDMAN

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